context (208). Livy mentions cohorts regularly during the years that follow the end of the Second Punic War. The first cohort to be mentioned by name is a cohort of the Marsi, a central Italian tribe, during the war against the Celts in northern Italy (196). The most illuminating reference to cohorts is in Livy's account of the events which precipitated the battle of Pydna (168). The account is of paramount importance as it is almost certainly drawn from Polybius, whom Livy claims to have followed for events in Greece. In this episode five cohorts are mentioned by name. Three of these, the Marrucini, Paeligni and Vestini, are drawn from tribal areas, all in central Italy and all long under terms of alliance with Rome. The other two are from Latin colonies at Firmum on the Adriatic coast and Cremona in the Po valley. Two allied *turmae* are also mentioned by name, which implies that the cohorts were there. These are both from Latin colonies and of particular interest is the fact that they are the partner colonies of the two just mentioned. Latin colonies were established in pairs. The two *turmae* are from Aesernia, the partner of Firmum (both founded in 264) and Placentia the partner of Cremona (both founded in 218).

Although not called a cohort by Livy, an earlier example of an allied cohort may be seen in the 500 Praenestines who in 216 BC were on their way to join the Roman army opposing Hannibal in Apulia. When they received news of the defeat at Cannae, they occupied the fortess of Casilinum (modern Capua). Here they withstood a Carthaginian siege lasting several months, surrendering only on the point of starvation. The Romans rewarded their bravery by granting them citizenship. The unit was commanded by a Praenestine *praetor*, Marcus Anicius.

This story is interesting for two reasons. First, it shows a unit of about 500 men drawn from one Latin town which had been made a Roman ally after the Latin War (*c.* 340). Secondly, it was commanded by a *praetor*, the original title for the chief magistrate of a Latin town. Rome's chief magistrates had also originally borne this name but at some time before 366 the title had been changed to consul. The old title survived in the name *praetorium* given to the site of the general's tent. The name *praetor* was reintroduced in 366 for a second-rank magistrate whose main job was supervising the administration of justice. By 197 the number had increased to six. Two of these were always in Spain, where Rome was forced to keep a permanent military presence.

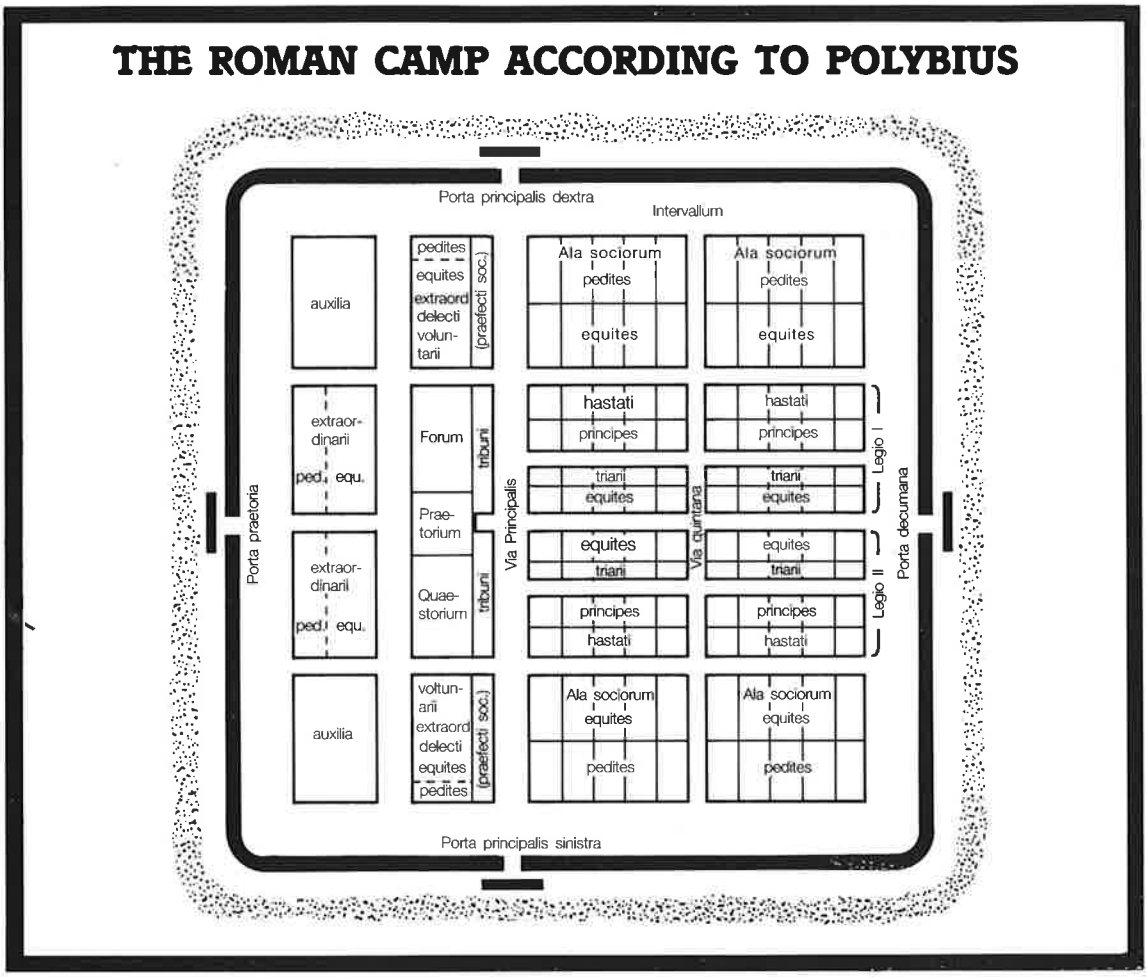
It seems probable that the allies supplied cohorts, each consisting of a cross-section of those liable for military service under the command of local magistrates. Polybius states that the allies were divided into four wings (*alae*), two for each consular army of two legions. They were commanded by 12 prefects (*praefecti sociorum*), three for each *ala*. These were Romans and it is possible that they were matched by three senior officers of allied origin to bring them into line with the six tribunes of the legions. About 600 horsemen and 1,600 infantry were selected from the cream of the allies in each consular army to form the *extraordinarii*. These crack troops formed the vanguard on the march and supplied the consul's bodyguard. It is clear from Livy's account of the Ligurian war of 181 BC* that the infantry of the *extraordinarii* were divided into four cohorts.

The Army in the Field

Polybius' account is full of details of the Roman army on campaign, making it possible to reconstruct a picture of a 2nd-century consular army on the march, in camp and in battle.

At dawn the horn blower (*cornicen*) on duty outside the tent of the *primus pilus* sounded the end of the fourth watch announcing the beginning of a new

* Rome waged intermittent wars against the Ligurians in the later 3rd and early 2nd century for the control of the mountainous coastline around modern Genoa.



day. The sentries relaxed at their posts around the camp as they waited to be relieved and the guard inspectors reported to the duty tribunes' tents to hand in the *tesserae*, wooden tablets identifying the guard posts that they had inspected during the night. Soon the soldiers emerged from their tents, stretching and shivering in the chill morning air. They ate their breakfast amongst the armour and weapons in front of their tents as they waited for the second signal. When the horn sounded again, the duty maniples rushed off to take down the tents and pack the baggage of the senior officers, the consul, tribunes and prefects. They then dismantled their own tents and loaded their equipment on to the mules.

On the third blast of the horn the soldiers fell in, maniple by maniple in the *intervallum*, the 60 m space between the tents and the rampart. Legion I assembled beneath the rampart to the right of the rear gate (*porta decumana*). Legion II assembled in a similar position to the left of the rear gate. The allies formed up beneath the side ramparts, the right wing near the right side entrance (*porta principalis dextra*) and the left wing on the opposite side of the camp near the left entrance (*porta principalis sinistra*). Getting 20,000 men and their baggage out of camp was no easy task and would have been done in a systematic way, using all the gates. Even so, it would have taken several hours.

The *extraordinarii*, the cream of the allies, who were encamped around the general's tent, formed the vanguard and were the first to move out. They probably assembled at the front of the camp and would leave by the main gate (*porta praetoria*). In enemy territory the 600 horsemen of the *extraordinarii* would almost certainly have fanned out to form a protective screen ahead of the army,

constantly on the lookout for ambushes and sending frequent messages back to the consul to keep him informed of the situation ahead.

Once the vanguard was on its way, the right wing of the allies moved out through the right side gate (*porta principalis dextra*) with its baggage train at the rear. It was followed by Legion I which left by the rear gate (*porta decumana*). Legion II was the next to leave, using the same gate. Each legion was followed by its own baggage train. The left wing of the allies, which formed the rearguard, moved out last using the left gate of the camp (*porta principalis sinistra*). Its baggage train was placed in front so that it could be more easily protected. The cavalry either rode behind its own legion/*ala* or on either side of the baggage train, keeping it in order and protecting it from attack. Roman cavalry horses were not shod and would have been obliged to keep off metalled roads.

Although the soldiers did not carry their food, cooking utensils, entrenching tools or personal belongings as they did 100 years later, each man wore his armour with his shield slung on a strap over his left shoulder and carried his weapons, either spear or javelins, and a bundle of palisade stakes.

A consular army of two legions plus its allied contingents and 2,400 cavalry stretched out for more than 20 km. Marching four abreast, as described by the Roman general Arrian, each legion must have extended about two kilometres. The Jewish historian Josephus describes the legions marching six abreast, but this would have been along wide Roman roads. Four abreast seems more likely in enemy territory where there were no Roman roads. Polybius recommends six feet (*c.* 1.8 m) per man so that they do not jostle each other. When marching in step, which both the Greeks and Romans must have done to perform complicated parade ground manoeuvres, it is possible to move in close order. But when marching in broken step carrying equipment, the soldiers had to march in open order, allowing about 2 m for each man to avoid jostling the man on either side or stumbling over the man in front should he trip or stop.

The baggage train, possibly as many as 2,000 mules per legion plus the siege weapons, must have more than doubled the length of the column. Further behind stretched an endless straggling line of camp followers: merchants of all kinds ready to meet the soldiers' every need and convert booty into hard cash; slave traders eager to buy the prisoners of war; slaves, girlfriends, and prostitutes. Before the last person had left the camp, the surveyors would already be looking for a site for the next one.

If an attack was threatened and the route was through open country, the army marched in battle order (*triplex acies*) with the *triarii*, *principes* and *hastati* in three parallel columns. This reduced the length of the army to 6-7 km. Each maniple was followed by its own baggage which presumably filled the gaps normally left between the maniples. If attacked, the baggage was moved behind the line and the gaps closed. Faced with an attack from the front, the army could easily wheel into line of battle. If the threat was from one flank the *hastati*, who formed the front line, formed up on that side. If an attack was then mounted from the other flank, the *hastati* would have to wheel round the front of the legion.

As the army neared the end of its march one of the tribunes and the centurions who formed the camp surveying unit were sent ahead to select a site for the camp. If contact had been made with the enemy, they looked for a site about 4 km from the enemy position close to a good water supply the enemy could not cut off or foul. The site had to be open, preferably on rising ground and with no cover which could be exploited by the enemy. The camp itself covered an area about 700 m square. A point which afforded maximum visibility was selected for the site of the consul's tent and a white flag was posted on the spot. A red flag was set up on the side nearest the water. Here the legions would camp. This was normally also the side nearest the enemy. The other key positions, the line of the roads and the ramparts, were similarly marked out so that by the time the army arrived each unit would know both

where to leave its baggage and where to start work on the defences.

A marching camp was normally surrounded by a ditch three Roman feet (*c.* 0.9 m) deep. The earth was piled up on the inside, faced with turf and levelled off to form a low rampart. The two legions constructed the defences at the front and rear of the camp while the right and left wings of the allies built the right and left sides respectively. Each maniple was allotted a section about 25 m long. The centurions checked that the work of their maniples was done properly while a pair of tribunes or prefects supervised the overall work on each side of the camp.

Far stronger defences were needed when camping close to the enemy, and the work was likely to be hampered by attacks, particularly by enemy cavalry. Therefore as the army arrived all the cavalry, the light-armed troops and half the heavy infantry were deployed in defensive battle array in front of the projected line of the ditch facing the enemy. The baggage train was placed behind the line of the rampart and the remainder of the troops began to dig in. They dug a trench 12 Roman feet (3.6 m) wide and 9 feet (2.7 m) deep, piling up the earth on the inside to form a turf-faced rampart 4 feet (1.2 m) high.

On the march each soldier carried a bundle of sharpened stakes which were embedded in the top of the rampart to form a fence. The stakes were cut from sturdy branches and usually had two, three or at the most four lateral branches which were cut short and sharpened. They were planted close together in the rampart with the lateral branches intertwined so that it was hard to determine which branch belonged to which stake. This made it very difficult for more than one attacker to get hold of the same stake to pull it out and ensured that they would gash their hands in the attempt.

As work proceeded the infantry were gradually withdrawn from the battle line, maniple by maniple, starting with the *triarii* who were nearest the rampart. These troops were put to work digging the other sides of the camp. The cavalry were not withdrawn until the defences facing the enemy were complete.

Inside the Camp

Polybius' description of the inside of the camp is complicated and it is possible to interpret the details in more than one way. However, certain features are beyond dispute. Wherever possible the camp was laid out on a rectangular grid with two main roads intersecting at right angles near the centre of the camp. One of these roads, the 100 ft (30 m) wide *via principalis*, ran across the entire width of the camp, passing in front of the consul's tent (*praetorium*). The tents of the tribunes and prefects were pitched along this road on the same side as the *praetorium*. A second road (*via praetoria*), also 100 ft wide and running at right angles to the *via principalis*, was projected from the front of the *praetorium*. This was usually in the direction of the enemy. The two legions camped on either side of this road, Legion I on the right and Legion II on the left.

The legionary cavalry camped facing the road, each *turma* being allowed an area 100 ft (30 m) square in which to pitch their tents and tether their horses. The *triarii* encamped behind them, facing in the opposite direction, each maniple being allowed an area 100x50 Roman feet. A roadway 50 feet wide was left between the *triarii* and the *principes*, who pitched their tents opposite and facing them, each maniple being allotted a 100-foot square. The *hastati* were similarly encamped back to back with the *principes*. The allies pitched their tents in a similar way opposite the *hastati*, but would have required a much greater area for their cavalry.

The first maniples (*primi ordines*) were nearest the *via principalis* and the tenth maniples farthest away beneath the rampart. A space was left between the fifth and sixth maniples forming another road (*via quintana*).

This part of Polybius' description was confirmed early this century when a series of Late Republican camps were excavated at Renieblas in Spain. The excavations in Camp III, which is believed to be the camp Quintus Fulvius

Nobilior occupied in the winter of 153-152 BC, uncovered the remains of a large number of buildings including the foundations of a group of barrack blocks for half a legion or five allied cohorts encamped almost exactly as Polybius described. The barracks, being of stone, were built on a 130-foot (*c.* 40 m) grid, considerably larger than Polybius' 100-foot allowance for tents. The Greek historian completes his description of the interior arrangement of the camp by placing a market (*forum*) and supply depot (*quaestorium*) in the spaces on either side of the *praetorium*. The *extraordinarii* set up their tents behind these. A space 200 ft (60 m) wide was left between the tents and the rampart so that missiles thrown into the camp could not reach the tents. This space (*intervallum*) also served as a place for the army to assemble when preparing to leave camp.

Polybius adds that if the two consuls were operating together they camped back to back, forming a single oblong camp. This has led some commentators to suggest that Polybius was in fact describing half such a double camp and that in a single consular camp the troops would be more evenly distributed around the *praetorium*. There is much to recommend this view. The excavations in Camp III at Renieblas show a more even distribution of the troops but it must be pointed out that the position of the *praetorium* is unknown. Furthermore it is not a rectangular camp and is therefore atypical.

On the first night in camp everybody, including slaves, assembled before the tribunes where they individually swore the camp oath, vowing to steal nothing and to take anything they found to the tribunes. The soldiers then began setting up the tents. Those of the consul, tribunes and prefects were pitched first. Three maniples of the *hastati* or *principes* were allotted to each tribune on a three-day rota, one maniple taking on the duty each day. The duty maniples set up the tribunes' tents, levelled the area around them, fenced in their baggage and attended to their other needs. They also provided two guards, one for the front and one for the back of the tribune's tent. A guard consisted of four men who between them performed the duty round the clock. Eighteen of the *principes* and *hastati* maniples shared this duty. The other two were responsible for keeping the area in front of the tribunes' tents (*via principalis*) tidy, for it was here that the soldiers assembled during the day.

Each maniple of the *triarii* had to provide a guard (four men) for the cavalry *turma* behind it. They had to keep a general lookout and make sure the horses did not break loose or become caught up in their tethers. All the maniples took it in turn to stand guard round the consul's tent.

At sunset four men, one each from the tenth maniple of the *hastati, principes* and *triarii* and one from the tenth *turma* of the cavalry, reported to the duty tribune's tent to collect the password written on a wooden tablet. On returning to their quarters each man showed the password and then, in the presence of witnesses, passed it to the commander of the next maniple. So it passed up the line until it reached the first maniple whose centurion was bound to return it to the tribune before dark.

Besides the guards already mentioned who served round the clock, three overnight guards were posted at the stores depot (*quaestorium*) and two at the tents of each of the general's staff officers (*legati*). Guards from the *velites* were posted along the ramparts with ten at each gate. Each unit also appointed its own sentries for the night. These guards consisted of four men, one taking each of the four night watches. The centurions of the first maniple of the *triarii* were responsible for ensuring that the watches were sounded on the horn (*cornu*) at the correct times during the night. The men standing the first watch were escorted to the tribune's tent by their *optio* where they received a small tablet (*tessera*) identifying the position they had to guard.

Four men also reported to the tribune each evening. These were the cavalrymen whose duty it was to inspect the guards. The tribune divided the guard posts up amongst them in an arbitrary fashion so that the sentries could not know when they were to be visited. Each inspector was given one watch

during which he had to inspect the posts on his list accompanied by two or three friends who acted as witnesses. During the night all the posts were visited. If awake, the senty handed the *tessera* to the inspector; if asleep, the inspector passed on saying nothing. One can imagine the terror of the sentry who still had his *tessera* at daybreak, for it meant almost certain death if he had dozed off.

At dawn the guard patrols reported to the tribune and handed in the collected tablets. If a tablet was missing, the post was identified and the centurion of the maniple responsible was ordered to report to the tribune with the four sentries. The culprit, who was easily identified, stood immediate court-martial before the tribunes. If found guilty, the tribune touched him with a cudgel. He then had to run the gauntlet, being either beaten or stoned (*fustuarium*). Even if he managed to get out of the camp alive, he was doomed to live the rest of his life in exile. If it transpired that the guard inspector had failed to make his round properly, he suffered the same fate. Polybius adds that the night watches were most scrupulously kept.

Fustuarium was also inflicted on anyone giving false evidence and on soldiers who habitually committed the same offence. Minor offences were punished by fines or flogging. The worst offence a soldier could commit was desertion to the enemy. The surrender of these deserters was always demanded as part of the treaty arrangements after a successful campaign. They were often thrown to the wild beasts in the arena.

The tribunes, and presumably the prefects, were on duty in pairs. Dawn and dusk were their busiest times. At daybreak while one of the duty tribunes was receiving the reports of the guard patrols, the other had to attend the consul's dawn briefing where he received his orders for the day. He then returned to his tent where the centurions and decurions would be waiting. The chores for the day were allotted among the maniples, with the exception of the maniple which was on duty at the consul's tent. Having received their orders, the centurions returned to their maniples to select the men for the day's tasks.

A patrol consisting of a strong cavalry contingent, probably from the *extraordinarii,* sometimes reinforced by *velites* under the command of a senior tribune or the consul himself, would be sent out to inspect the enemy position. Sometimes the centurions of the *primi ordines* accompanied the consul. Once the area had been reconnoitred, the consul called a council of war to discuss the situation and the advisability of offering battle. The council of war was attended by the consul's staff officers, *legati*, (senators invited along on the campaign by the consul), the tribunes, prefects and the centurions of the *primi ordines*. This last class must have included the chief decurions of the cavalry.

The council of war was purely advisory. The final decision lay with the consul. If he decided to offer battle immediately, a red flag was hoisted outide his tent to inform the soldiers who would leave their chores, collect their weapons and assemble beneath the ramparts as they did when preparing to march.

The Army in Battle

The cavalry and the *velites* were sent out first to harass the enemy, encouraging him to accept the offer of battle, and to keep him at bay while the heavy infantry were being drawn up for battle. A strong force was tasked with holding the camp. If the consul felt certain of victory, this job was sometimes given the *triarii*. The legions would then move out through the rear gate (*porta decumana*), which normally faced the enemy, and the allies through the two side gates, putting them in the correct positions for the battle line.

If the consul seriously intended to offer battle, he moved the army forward until it was out of range of covering fire from the artillery in the Roman camp. If he was simply making a gesture, usually to raise the morale of the troops, he would line up just in front of the ramparts, under cover of his artillery and archers, a position from which it was easy to withdraw to the camp if the

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